

Omelette Arnold Bennett (original Savoy recipe)

Serves: 1

For the haddock

1 fillet of smoked haddock (Finnan, if possible) – undyed, skin and bones removed
550ml milk
Sprig of fresh thyme, leaves picked
2 cloves of garlic, crushed

For the hollandaise sauce

100g egg yolks (from 4 or 5 eggs, depending on their size)
20ml white wine vinegar
1 tbsp English mustard
250g clarified butter, melted

For the béchamel sauce

500ml milk (retained from the haddock, above)
2 bay leaves
4 cloves
12 black peppercorns
50g butter
50g plain flour
Pinch of white pepper
50g cheddar, grated
50g gruyère, grated
4 eggs

1. To make the haddock, place all ingredients in a heavy-bottomed pan and simmer until it is cooked. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Sieve, reserving the milk for the béchamel, then flake the fish and cover with clingfilm or tinfoil, so it doesn't dry out. Set aside.
2. To make the hollandaise sauce, put the egg yolks and half the vinegar in a bowl and gently whisk over a pan of boiling water. The yolks will begin to thicken: don't let them scramble. If they get too hot, move them off the heat for 30 seconds, but continue to whisk. Remove and place the bowl on a damp tea towel, which will help to keep it stable during the next stage.
3. Add the mustard, then slowly add the warm, clarified butter, whisking the whole time. Do not add it too quickly or the sauce will split; do not let it get too cold, or it will congeal. Once all the butter is incorporated and the sauce is thick and emulsified, season to taste with salt and more of the vinegar.
4. For the béchamel, bring 500ml of the milk to boiling point, with the bay leaves, cloves and peppercorns. Remove from the heat and infuse for 20 minutes, then strain. Melt the butter in a pan, stir in the flour and cook over a low heat for 5 minutes. Add the milk, a little at a time, stirring until smooth. Keep adding more until the sauce thickens. Cook for 10 minutes, then season with salt and white pepper. Cool slightly.

5. Once the béchamel has cooled, but is still warm (it should be the same temperature as the hollandaise), add 100g of it to the hollandaise and mix until nice and smooth. Check the seasoning and add more salt if needed.

6. Now scramble four eggs until they are just cooked, but still a bit runny. Season with salt and pepper and place in the bottom of a medium-sized serving dish. Flake the haddock evenly on top, then add the cheese and cover evenly with the hollandaise glaze.

7. Bake in a hot oven for 3-5 minutes, or until it has started to firm up, then brown gently under a hot grill. Serve immediately.